

Corvallis Gazette.

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STREET IMPROVEMENTS.

The question of street improvement is always a live one in a live town. It is constantly before a city council and is a subject of never-ending complexity from various causes. Almost all intelligent citizens recognize the advantages of good streets, but too many of them want somebody else to pay for the improvements.

Under the provisions of the charter of the city of Corvallis adopted in 1891, no street improvements could be ordered by the council and paid for by a tax upon the adjacent property without the consent of one-half the owners of the property affected; indeed, the consent of two-thirds of the property-owners was important. Through the efforts of a few public spirited persons the necessary signatures were obtained to a petition for the grading and graveling of Second street and a portion of Madison and the cost was duly assessed against the property affected. It was thought that the excellent manner in which this work was performed would induce others to petition for street improvements, but these expectations were not met. The council then, recognizing the importance of improving Monroe street, authorized work to the amount of \$1900 which was paid for out of the general fund, the property on such street paying only its proportion with all other property within the city. This seemed an injustice to those who had just paid for the expensive improvements on Second and Madison streets, the former of which was more benefit to the city as a whole than the improvement of any other street could be. At that time, however, there appeared to be no other way of placing Monroe street in good condition for winter travel, as the property-owners refused to present the necessary petition.

At the last session of the legislature the charter was amended so that two-thirds of the members of the council could order street work and assess the cost against the property directly benefited. The council does not apparently recognize this fact and have ordered a vast amount of grading, all of which is to be paid for out of the general fund. There are now six teams and as many men at work on streets here and there and this expense is to be borne by all the tax-payers without regard to whose property is affected. The work which is being done on Monroe street or College avenue from the O. P. track to the intersection of the first county road running in from the north might, with consistency, be charged to the general fund because it is a main avenue leading to the city and the expense would fall too heavily on the three or four persons who own the adjacent acre property within the incorporation. The section of road or street in question is all within the incorporation and not merely the north half of it as some persons suppose. Except one lot west of the O. P. track the land on the south side of the road is college property and not within the incorporation.

Two blocks north, Van Buren street has been graded through town lots from Second street to the western city limits, or to an intersection with the county road already mentioned. This last is not an important improvement, since Monroe street or College avenue would accommodate the country travel from the northwest.

Two blocks north of Van Buren, Tyler street has been graded from Second to the Polk county road. This could not from any reasonable standpoint be considered an especially important improvement but still it has been paid for out of the general fund.

The present system of street work certainly will not meet the approval of those who foot the bills. The plan is a poor one, and while no jobbery is charged, the system is certainly open to it. The council now has the power and when it seems expedient to grade a street let it have the work done and assess the adjacent property to pay for it.

THE WOOL TRADE.

On account of the attitude of the present administration in respect to duties on wool, the trade in that commodity is greatly demoralized, and the condition of this market affects Oregon perhaps more than any other one element of the tariff question. Secretary Carville is reported in the Boston Commercial Bulletin (protection) of May 27th and the Boston Herald (democratic) of May 26th to have stated that "free wool" would be in operation within six months of the calling of the special session. The same issue of the latter journal says, "A few steps more and the entire domestic market will be down to free wool. It is at this basis that manufacturers and dealers must buy wool or they cannot afford to touch it. Manufacturers are already proceeding with the idea of wool as low as it can be bought abroad, landed here, minus the duty."

There seems little ground upon which to base any hope for favorable reaction in prices. The conclusions of most sellers are that, with prices gravitating to free wool values, the shipments which are first in the market and first sold will net better figures than later shipments.

In an interview with one of the local wool dealers we obtained some facts which show a discouraging loss to the wool interests of the county in consequence of the threatened legislation affecting that product. For the four years preceding 1893 the prices paid on June 10th for wool by the dealer in Corvallis were as follows: In 1889, 20 cents; 1890, 21 cents; 1891, 20½ cents; 1892, 18½ cents, making an average of 20 cents for the period of republican administration. This year on June 10th the same dealer is paying 14 cents which is all the market warrants. The decline from the average price of the past four years is 6 cents. It may be seen from the dealer's books that a certain farmer who has been selling yearly about 1500 pounds of wool, will this year sustain a loss of \$300 on his average yearly income. Another farmer's income from wool will be \$180 less than usual; another \$72; another \$54; another \$66, and so on. It is estimated that this year 75,000 pounds of wool will be produced in this county, and the unsettled condition of the market will cause a loss of \$4,500 to our wool-growers. About the same percentage of loss will apply to the entire wool product of the state.

To what extent the present tariff schedules will be changed, if at all, by the democrats cannot now be foretold with certainty, but its first action will be in the direction of placing raw materials on the free list. The threatened change is depressing all trades, and the McKinley act, so far as it relates to American wool, is practically and in effect repealed now.

The political fight at Washington among the Oregon democrats goes bravely on. Murphy and Markley were supposed to hold an impregnable position near the appointing power, but another faction of the party, under the leadership of Fred Flood, made an assault upon the Murphy-Markley breast-works, and captured the special Indian agency for Col. Lane. This broke the power behind the throne, and the Oregon straight-outs taking courage from the success of the advanced guard are hurrying to the front. Col. Bob Miller is now in command of a detachment well in the fore-front of battle and after all he may be able to capture a more valuable prize than a bit of cold turkey. The battle is now progressing with fury within the lines of intrenchments.

Later advices from the seat of war announce that Harry, chairman of the national central committee had come to the relief of the Murphy-Markley forces, that the district attorneys had fallen to Murphy and that he had thereupon retired from the field and returned to Oregon. Markley, however, has lost the Marshalship to Henry C. Grady, and J. F. Black of Halsey, will become collector of customs at Portland. Both the latter had been recommended by Flood and Miller.

McKINLEY RENOMINATED.

On June 8th, at Columbus, McKinley was renominated for governor of Ohio. With superb eloquence he received the laurels of success, a presage, perhaps, of higher honors to come. The great protectionist was in magnificent form, and in accepting the nomination as the republican candidate for governor of Ohio, virtually outlined the declaration of principles by which he may be judged as a candidate for the presidency. In opening his address of acceptance he said that the nomination is both an honor and one which imposed a duty. He might forego the honor, but could not refuse the duty. Continuing, he challenged the democratic party to battle on both state and national issues. He reviewed at length the financial situation, pointing out that Cleveland first fixed the \$100,000,000 gold reserve as the lowest safe limit, and, having erected the danger signal, curiously enough was the first to haul it down. Was it to be wondered at that people were distrustful, especially in view of the fact that the administration had put forth no line of financial policy? If to day the president would announce that there would be no change in the industrial legislation of the country and the financial situation would be met and solved on the standard of financial honor and national good faith established by the republican party, confidence would at once be restored. Cleveland says the Sherman silver bill is the cause of the depression, but does not convene congress to repeal it. Is this because he thinks further financial distress necessary to convince his party of the necessity of such financial legislation? If so, democratic ascendancy will prove a costly lesson. While waiting for democrats to carry out the declarations in their platform on the tariff, the country's business is paralyzed because of uncertainty. If they do as they promised they will revise the tariff on a British free-trade basis, striking at many industries, making profitless capital, and throwing thousands of American workmen out of employment. If the expectation of what the democrats would do has destroyed confidence, what will the full realization do? But the party is divided into factions for and against the administration, and is split asunder on the tariff and currency issues, poorly prepared to grapple with the gravity of the situation. With a gold president and a silver congress what can be done? A do-nothing policy must be the result. The only direction to look for relief is to the republican party.

The speaker then took up the pension frauds question, saying he did not object to striking unworthy pensioners from the rolls, but declared the ruling of the secretary of the interior would result in striking from the pension rolls thousands of worthy dependent soldiers. The speaker concluded with an eulogy on the republican party and its legislation. The Ohio platform indorses the national republican platform of 1892 and the administration of President Harrison; favors protection to American labor and industries and reciprocity; protests against free wool; declares the tariff laws should protect the products of the farm as well as the factory; demands the enactment of laws to restrict immigration; condemns as unfriendly and unjust the policy of the present administration toward pensioners; denounces the avowed purposes of the democrats to repeal the bank tax.

For many years Ford's theater building, in Washington, in which Lincoln was assassinated, has been owned and used by the government, first as an army museum, and later by the records and pension division of the surgeon-general's office. On the 9th inst. the building collapsed when it contained near 500 employees of the government, 25 of whom were killed outright and many others severely injured. The building had been condemned years before but the immediate cause of the tragedy was an excavation being made underneath for the reception of an electric light plant. A rather notable coincidence is the fact that the structure fell on the funeral day of Edwin Booth, brother of Lincoln's assassin.

Roseburg found she could not raise the \$75,000 subsidy asked for the Coos Bay railroad on condition of its being built into that city. The Roseburg people sent a committee to San Francisco to raise \$25,000 of it. The newspapers there advised that this amount be subscribed, and wholesale merchants and others give assurance that it will be. San Francisco is waking up to her situation. She sees that she must go down in her pockets to retain her commercial supremacy. It behooves Portland to keep her weather eye peeled.—Salem Statesman.

The people of Crook county are agitating the question of constructing a wagon road from Prineville west to connect with the Oregon Pacific railroad, and have written to county Judge Duncan to see if the people of Linn county will aid such a project. There is a great district and large trade over there awaiting for an outlet to Albany. That portion of eastern Oregon cannot remain much longer without rail connection, and we hope it will be the Oregon Pacific to first enter that region.—Herald.

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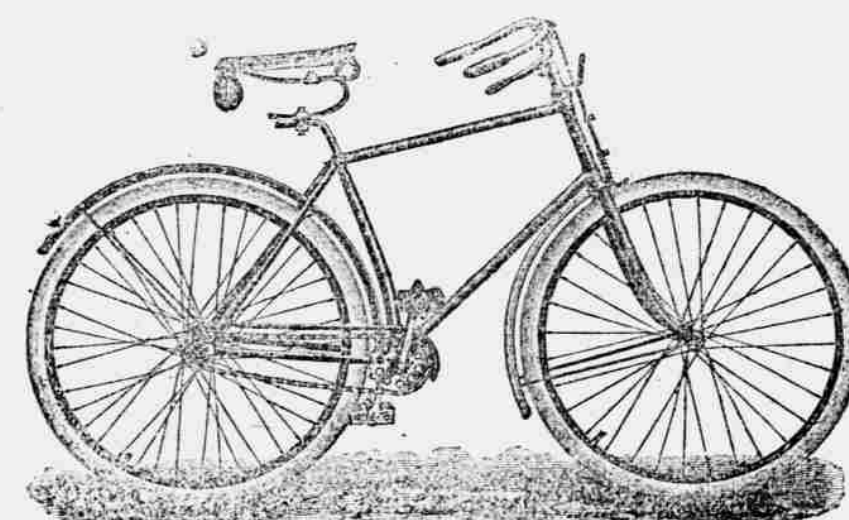
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